File Title: Audio Recording of the *Seni Rupa Baru* Project 1 Exhibit Discussion_tape 1
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Host: Haswinar Arifin and Benny Subianto will present today's discussion with Arief Budiman as the moderator. Arief, please begin the discussion. Thank you.

Arief Budiman: Thank you. Good evening. This is actually a new kind of discussion in the spirit of the New Art Movement. So let's discuss in an informal, laid-back spirit. I am flexible in my role as moderator, and I can also provide some main ideas for the discussion. And these two colleagues actually research urban culture in Jakarta. Here they will share their insights from their findings on the variations of urban culture. I will structure the discussion: I'll talk for a little bit about what is actually going on here, in my opinion, and then my colleagues will contribute stories from their research experiences, which is about the variations of Jakarta's urban culture. Then perhaps Jim will contribute to further elaborate on my remarks. Otherwise, let's start the discussion.

I will begin by shifting from my role as a moderator to a speaker. Actually, I was involved in the movement—not of my own accord. One day, I received an invitation from Kompas to a meeting at their offices about the New Art Movement. I arrived without any idea of what exactly would be discussed. I had read about it before, but I had been in the US at the time, so I didn't know much about it. There was a group of artists who were looking to break free from the art establishment. However, I wasn't really clear on the issue until I had received the invitation from Kompas to discuss it. I happened to have met Jim at Tempo, and he had told me about what he did with the exhibitions and his plans for this exhibit. I was very enthusiastic to hear about it, even with little understanding of the issue. We spoke for a long time about it. Why was I so enthusiastic? Because even without being directly connected to the New Art Movement, I had entered a debate in literature, which you might already know as the Contextual Literature (*Sastra Kontekstual*). I had felt that these were parallel movements. In fact, Jim had known about it before I had, and it wasn't a new idea, but I had been involved in the issue from the perspective of Contextual Literature, so I felt enthusiastic. I thought, so, in the fine arts they have the same issue. Because of that, I wanted to get involved in discussions. Since there were parallels, I thought that Jim's issue was also mine. What was it? Actually we had the least issue. I was actually one of the signees of the *Manikebo (Manifesto Kebudayaan)*: a cultural manifesto, which we objected to calling *Manikebo,* but for this discussion let's just call it that. I was a manifesto signee, and in the field of literature, I was a successor to the "1945 Generation" of writers that believes—even when in practice a lot of them were pluralists—that the arts has a singular measure. So, when someone wants to create art, they have to be able to interpret or achieve the result of that one standard. If they fail to do that, they fail at creating a work of art, of being an artist. The measure is singular, for example, there is one truth; when people do not reflect that truth, they are wrong. It's simple; there is right and wrong. It applies

in the arts; there is good and bad. Those that fail at being one with the essential are bad artists. So there's one standard, but what is it? No one could define it. It had never been very clear. I was confused; people said that there was one standard that they strived for but they could not formulate it. Everyone was guessing and following, one follows another, and so on, so I became very critical of it. Unfortunately, I saw that as a former colony, we had a colonial mentality as well. We thought that the one standard was in the West. So we just followed the West. So if someone won the Nobel Prize, their work was the standard, and we all wrote in the style of the Nobel winners. Without realising it, we had become colonised in terms of art, internationally. Then—and this was what made me doubtful—was there really a single standard in the arts? Then I saw there was even a more horrible process happening among the artists in the rural areas, say poets. I had spoken to some poets in rural areas in Central Java, with no fame or recognition. They were also looking for this single measure. What was it? For those poets, the standard is the poems of Goenawan Mohamad, or Subagyo Sastrowardoyo, or Pak Haryono Wan. So they studied them and they worked on different variations, but essentially they were looking to become Goenawan Mohamad, Chairil Anwar, or Subagyo Sastrowardoyo. Every one of them wanted to become somebody. What they weren't being was themselves. It was very odd, these poets living in the country, usually poorly, would be dealing with daily things like how to bring food to the table tomorrow, how to nourish themselves, and so on. However, when it came to poetry, they started talking about existence, then about peace and quiet, about the white snow, etc. It's because they wanted to be artists. The ambition was to be an artist, and they thought that was what artists did. There was that one measure. What happened? What happened was that they disregarded their own surroundings. So, here's what I thought, maybe they shouldn't try to be someone else, and be themselves and tend to their surroundings. I came at the conclusion that maybe aesthetics was contextual. It means that every group of people—it could be any group, a social class or ethnic group or national group, anything—they should have their own aesthetics that other groups might not understand, that might not be understood at all. Not being understood is okay for me. What's important is not to impose one group's measure on others. If one said that they were right, that their aesthetics were right, I would agree. I'd have no problem with my aesthetics or theirs, but do not say that either is the measure with which we create art. Because then it would be an imperialism of aesthetics. This is what makes people who do not understand the arts—or the artists working in that area, or the traditional artists—regard some as not artists because they don't understand the correct art. Similarly, the art in the commercial images of the business world, it is actually art. In literature, the most prominent discussion or polemic is on pop literature. Some say it's not literature, some say it is. What about Marga T.—is his work literature or not? I think we ask the wrong question. The question is asked with one measure in mind. But if we used two measures, we would have come to a solution. There are those who aspire to be like Chairil Anwar. There's nothing wrong with works of art intended for a specific audience. However, pop literature, or Marga T's works, or anyone else's, is an art dynamic that has its own measure for the society. I think what's important now is

for us to be modest, that the aesthetics that we create are always intended for specific audiences. Let's not arrogantly say that this is the right measure. That's because, in my opinion, aesthetics do not have a single measure, but are a plural thing, differing from one another. For me, that was the starting point that made me enthusiastic about the idea of this exhibition. When I met Jim at Tempo, we talked about what we had been doing. Jim also talked about the same thing at the Kompas discussion. He also said that he had studied fine art, and then struggled with the formula to create beautiful works of art. He had asked his teachers and everyone else, but he didn't get any answer, just as I hadn't. Until he had finished school—have you finished school, Jim? Anyways, after spending years at ITB (Bandung Institute of Technology), he didn't find the measure of a good work of art. So he started creating what he felt at each moment was beautiful. What he created was different from the established art. There were many opinions. Some said it was good, some said it was bad. The problem was the same; there was the same anxiety, and the solution seemed the same. I mean, Jim is a part of his group, so I'm saying he's a personification of one group. The group also thinks that art is plural. Perhaps because it is said that the fine art is only in the TIM exhibition hall with the masters—Rusli, Zaini, Trisno Sumardjo, Usman Efendi, Sri Hadi, and so on—for example, those in the street in the form of stickers and billboards and cassette tapes, those aren't art. Those are commercials. Created for money. But while they aren't regarded as art, they control the lives of people, most of the people in Jakarta, and more. If we change our paradigm that art isn't something with only one measure, we could say that there is art out there that has a different measure, with different artistic values. So, if we just change our paradigm, that aesthetics isn't singular but plural, it will open our eyes. We will see, for instance, that there is a lively dynamics there in the apertension boxes, which I think Jim told me about. He saw outside, he saw the passing bus, he saw the supermarket, so many forms called designs, so alive and creative, with their own measures, that are not regarded as art at all, and ignored because of that, regarded as trash or just commercial. This was what made me sympathetic to the idea. So Jim started seeing things around him with a new paradigm, and he found so many pearls. What is clear is that we first have to do a mental switch, from the aesthetics that we follow, and start respecting those of others. Try to be on the same level with them. And see the existing dynamics. For instance, we encounter slang and so on, which we probably consider something wild and messy. But when we get into their world, there's beauty, a type of beauty that is different from the beauties of very serious aesthetics, which developed among the middle class and in Europe. So in essence, we're fighting the paradigm that says that the measure of art is singular with that which says that it is plural. And maybe I don't understand all of it; I'm not pretending that like Goenawan Mohamad's poems more than others'. Because I indeed have a middle class background, a Western education, and I'm not ashamed to admit it, but I'm different now from how I was then. I used to think that Goenawan's poems had to be imitated by everybody who wants to be a big artist. Until today, I still like Goenawan's poems, or Subadri's, or those of Abdul Hadi WM, but I'm also saying that probably the poems that little children sing have similar value, although maybe not quite the

same. That is the change of paradigm that is happening. I think with the New Art Movement or the Contextual Literature Polemic, we begin democratising our values, pluralising them. I'd also like to talk a bit about this exhibition. So what happens with the New Art Movement, as I hear it and understand it, a group of artists feel that they lost their measure, because the measure taught to them by their teachers was never clear. This group then—in Jim's own words—embarked on an odyssey. It's an odyssey like Star Trek, where earthlings find their way to other planets while finding out what is there. There's something. Deep within, they're actually trying to find themselves, identifying themselves: who am I? Indeed, sometimes in philosophy, existentialism, for instance, it is known that I only understand myself when I interact with others. I think it was Martin Buber who always said "I and thou relationship", so I understand that when I confront other people, who aren't me, I become myself. We experience that too. We're Indonesians, but we don't really think about it. But once we go to America or to Europe, among foreigners, we feel very much Indonesian. Why? Because there is the contact of the "I and thou relationship"; there is confrontation with other values. Only then I show myself more, my identity is more pronounced. I think the trek that this New Art Movement embarked on is similar. In essence, within their development, they go on an odyssey, like Star Trek, moving on from planet to planet, and find out what is there. Trying to understand, and it isn't what they're looking for, so they move on. In Jim's words, some members of the group have parked, have found their identities, but the others are still looking. And the first parking spot, with this *Project 1*, I say this is the first planet, and they're visiting the world of the aesthetics of Jakarta City in 1987. So in contextual art, there's always time and place. What we're expressing right now is the urban world of Jakarta in 1986-87, because it will be different in 1990. It's the time and space visited by the New Art Movement. They see, they try to understand, they relate to the people and the dynamics here, and then they try to express it. If they fail, it's not a problem, because it's a journey. For me, this exhibition is important but we cannot stop only at this exhibition. This exhibition is crucial for the next stage of things. If we stop here, it fails. So what's important is what happens after. What goes on after that? Probably the exhibition of Project 2 will see this group entering villages to see the expressions of art existing there, and then to display here something different. Then maybe they are to go to different regions, the longer they go the more they confront, the more planets and stars they visit, the more they express themselves, maturing as themselves. According to Jim, within the group there are two people who have found their place. One is Dede who has found his identity with his Super-Realism. If he's satisfied there, it's up to him. But if he still wants to continue the odyssey, he will search again, looking to understand another group's aesthetics. For me, this is a very interesting idea, and I think it is a valid process. That way, one won't get stuck, but keep expanding their perspective, confronting other values from their own, while continuing the process of becoming themselves. So, I think this exhibition is very important as an idea, as a process, because it is very relevant. I don't know why it was named Project 1, but as I understood that this was a journey, I came to think it was relevant to be referred to as Project 1. It means there will be Project 2, Project 3, and so on. Project 2 will be a

meeting of confrontation that this group has planned, to encounter the same things. Because Sardono, the dancer, is present today, I think he must have gone through the same thing. He used to perform Javanese dances with their own measure, and then he went to the US. At the expo, if I'm not mistaken. Sardono here is someone who is never satisfied with the form of his dances, so he joined Martha Graham and other schools—I don't know which—and then he lost his measure again. He found out that there are so many styles of dances. Finally, after coming back to Indonesia, I remember it was '68, I got married and he gave an strange performance, combining various dance forms. Then Sardono also went on a kind of odyssey to Bali, confronting Bali. And then he went to Dayak, in the remote areas of Kalimantan. Once again he tried to understand the expressions of dance in Kalimantan. While he confronted them, he began moulding himself, having a dialog. I think Sardono is one of the dancers who keeps creating new idioms because he is humble enough to keep on searching without quitting. For me, this is my interpretation of the background behind the New Art Movement. The members of the Movement might want to add on to that later. I'd also like to comment a bit on this exhibition. I was interested in the idea, although I hadn't seen the expression. Therefore, I came before this discussion, a few days ago. I looked, and I came to think that what is exhibited here forms a kind of report. This group is still in shock; it's still too soon to regard it as their own work. The exhibits are mostly what they saw, which were then reflected, and became a sort of journalistic report with some adaptation. I saw the comments on the book, where people expressed their confusion about the exhibition. It's apertension, so they only looked for the fun. It's okay for the gimmicks, the fun stuff. I don't see it here. I think Jim and this group mostly let the art talk rather than try to do a creative synthesis. I think creative synthesis hasn't been achieved here, but there's been an effort of understanding to level themselves receptively, and more to absorb and try to express and to change using these gimmicks. So, for me, this exhibition is just a transit point. It's like making a stop while on a bus. It's not the end of the journey. And what interests me isn't what happens in this exhibition, but rather the afterwards. What will happen? I'm anticipating with palpitations, what will happen to the artists of this New Art Movement. What process is going on within them after they start working? After they do something, or confront other measures? So, that's an introduction from me. Now we'll listen to my two friends here. They are doing research on the various designs of expressions of art in Jakarta. They will contribute to further to what I have introduced.

Speaker 1 (Haswinar): The two of us actually don't understand art that much. Rather, we do social research. But we think it's relevant for us to talk here because of how we understand the New Art Movement as about art that also intends to capture the social reality of the city—the symbols in the city. Therefore, what we're presenting here is a report about what the urban culture is like. It's actually rather difficult to define urban culture, because the city is an amalgamation of various things, and is very complex. From a vertical point of view, urban people are divided into classes: the middle class, the upper class, and the lower class. From the point of view of social standing,

we can see the rich, the poor, and the moderate. From the perspective of the government, there are also levels. There are variations vertically. Not to mention horizontally. We see groups such as ethnicities, a lot of which live in the city. Then, there are religious groups, political groups. These variations make the city culture even more complicated. Each group has its own culture system or symbols that relatively differ from one another. That's why it is difficult to define the city culture. There are also variations of culture in the city. The city is the place where foreign influences easily affect people. It adds to the complexity of the city. Not only do the foreign cultures enter, they also combine with the cultures in Indonesia. Aside from foreign cultures, there are also those of ethnicities or social classes based on their levels. Within the social structure, there is also a culture that bridges these relatively different social classes. The expression of such culture that we can see easily is in language, which we call a lingua franca, or the language of the masses, or the Jakartan language. It connects Sundanese to Ambonese or Javanese, and so on. One of the expressions is language, but it is also expressed in symbols in the city. We talk about culture because we think that the urban symbols in the city are what the New Art Movement wants to absorb. It's not one simple symbol. They are complex because not only are the symbols varied, but also they are a combination of the symbols existing in the city. This discussion is actually intended to question how far the New Art Movement can capture the symbols that exist in the city, capture the reality in the city. My friend Benny will discuss it further.

Speaker 1 (Benny): After Haswinar elaborated on the city, especially its complexity, we will be discussing the New Art Movement by observing urban reality. First, I will start from the assumption that the city is complex. There are the lower class, the middle class, the upper class, ethnicities, and various religions, traditions, and so on. Of course it wouldn't be easy for a fine arts movement to express the city's reality. There are difficulties in realising the city's reality in an exhibition, or in other forms of art. The New Art Movement claims to base its works of art, its creations, on the results of that research. It's something that we get behind very strongly. However, there is an impression that what are displayed here are not… for lack of better words, suitable or accurate. When I talked to one of the figures in the New Art Movement, I asked why the life or reality of the middle class was displayed. I got an answer that it was because the class was the most visible, dynamic, and vocal. But if he claims that the New Art Movement was a movement that strives to express urban reality, just displaying one class wouldn't be sufficient, right? So, who is the movement for, contextually? Just one class, right? We can also expand this question. Actually, what is exhibited here is the portrayal of the middle class or that of the New Art Movement. From the data I got from one of the figures of the New Art Movement, most of the members received some form of art education—higher education. They already hold established jobs, in the media or an advertising agency, etc. So they can be classified as part of the city's middle class. So what they express is no longer a portrayal of themselves, or at least the city's reality from their perspective, without considering other perspectives. It's very clear that we get many close idioms

that the middle class is familiar with, but we don't get the idioms of the lower class. Take the advertisements, for instance. Why are the advertisements limited only to those published on Tempo, Kompas, female magazines, etc.? Why not those on Pos Kota, for instance? It has a mosquito repellent ad, a *minyak agin* ad, etc.—those ads are regarded as tacky. Why not express the symbols or forms of art found among the upper class too? Or, in other words, the "jet set". Why aren't the idioms found in the hotels, in places such as executive clubs, etc. displayed here? I'm not making an accusation of anything, but only questioning, who does this exhibition reflect? The New Art Movement might be the only ones who can provide an answer. As for the symbols displayed here, I get the impression that they don't give away much, they don't contain clear social meaning. What do they contain? I don't think they can be regarded as social criticism. Who's being criticised? Or are they only plays? I'm afraid I don't know much about art, but probably this is a form of *klangenan*? *Klangenan* made by a group of established artists. Based on the data I obtained, the members of this New Fine Arts Movement are those who received art education and are in the formal sector in the city's society. So, they don't have much to think about; they don't think about the food to put on the table tomorrow, where to stay, etc. Their basic needs have been fulfilled. Maybe because they live in such routine, for instance in an advertising agency where they will have to compromise with clients or with the press and conform to the chief of editor, etc., when they create art, they are sort of isolated. They can't freely express themselves. Their freedom of creativity is limited. Free within limitations. So this exhibition becomes a release from their daily limitations. But it's just my assumption, and I don't know much about art. Therefore, I think the symbols are only presented as those symbols themselves, ancient symbols. So, no wonder the audience has no clue what they mean. Are the ads a promotion, say, to support the products of the industrial capitalists? Or do they mock them, instead? I think that is the first problem that the audience encounters. Why does this happen? I think it's because those symbols only represent themselves, without providing some understanding for the audience. But what are those symbols? They are the connection between the human's thoughts to the reality, and are the medium for the human's thoughts. So, for instance [citing advertisements], what do they mean? Also, the audience who comes here are mostly from the middle class. As we know, at Taman Ismail Marzuki, there are different levels. This type of event will have this type of audience; such type of event, such type of audience. Such categorisation eventually happens. If this event were attended by the uneducated, the unemployed, etc., it might not be understood at all. It might only be understood by at least high school graduates, or college undergraduates, or those who have good income, etc. So if this is said to be a form of contextual aesthetics, like what Arief mentioned earlier, contextual for whom? It's a question whose answer I don't have. Aside from that, there is another thing I'd like to say. It has to do with the impression that it's as if what are displayed here are portrayals of daily life. That they are, we can agree on. But are they only plucked from life, without being attached with other meanings? There is the impression that, for instance, the clothing is in the store, somewhere we can get it from. That's what daily life is like. In principle, I don't disagree. But do we just take them

as they are? Some say this is a sticker-like fine arts movement, in which we buy a sticker from the street and put it on the wall, while the same sticker will have a different meaning when we put on a wall in the slum, or in a fancy building. So I don't think it should come off as something that's just taken. I think that's what I conclude from what we've been studying so far. Haswinar studied slums and I studied an "end class" real estate. I think both society groups wouldn't fit in here contextually. That's all. Thank you.

Arief Budiman: Thank you. I'd like to invite Jim if he accepts, so it wouldn't have been like this. I think for everyone including myself, this exhibition is something new that hasn't been seen before. I believe the members of the New Art Movement hear your impressions. What is your impression? Please express it openly and honestly. What do you feel about an exhibition such as this? We were just trying to provide a background. You don't have to be polite. You could say that it's silly, dreadful, or anything. It's important for us, how you view what is exhibited here. We don't want to limit anyone's opinion. Everyone is free to expand on the background. Let's start the discussion freely. For anyone who'd like to offer their opinion, please come. Please go forward and take the mic.

Audience 1: When I see this exhibition, I will question things. I tend to see the New Art Movement exhibition as a fight against the fine arts elite. I've become doubtful as to whether they are fighting against the fine arts elite, but instead reformulating quotidian art as works of fine art. And then I wonder if the definition of the '79 movement is that fine arts are not in the same scope as painting, sculpture, and such. What I see is that the fine arts tend to be a new design. Also, I ask whether in this artwork there is, really, if they are problematising daily art, how do they understand art of the everyday? Thank you.

Arief Budiman: Is there anyone else who wants to offer their opinion? Please go forward.

Audience 2: Thank you. After enjoying the movement's Project 1 exhibition, and having read some articles in Kompas in their exhibition category, so far I'd like to know the catalog of the New Art Movement, and if the movement is fighting against elitism that exists within Indonesian fine art. Is it trying to express the theme or indications of quotidian fine art in such an exhibition. When I see fine art in my daily life, in the street in the form of billboards, neon sets, cinema posters, banners, etc., I don't feel any barriers. I feel the communication runs smoothly. For example, oh there's a sex film, a tea plantation ad, etc. However, seeing this exhibition, I feel some barriers. So, if the New Art Movement is trying to eliminate communication barriers as written in the catalog, I don't necessarily agree with that, so I became a bit suspicious of the movement. What if the New Art Movement fights the old elite but creates a new one in another form. I think only certain elite groups can get Kompas or Gramedia to cooperate and join an exhibition such as this. Finally, my

suspicion grew and I saw another thing: that there are an increasing number of individuals or groups who intend to express a theme, for instance a social theme, which sounds very festive, essentially not for the sake of the society. Or to express daily life not for it's sake but for the sake of the groups or individuals. This is more dangerous than the old elite. So I'm shouting for the society, for the daily life that is regarded as trash but is actually not. I think that in daily life, they do not need acknowledgement as art. They more need to be given order because the artists' target, when they are trusted with a project—an ad or a billboard—is to meet the consumer's requirements, to give the impression that it is the consumer's program, and to be paid in cash. I think when the economy and technology keep developing, quotidian art will continue, whether it is declared or not. Finally, I conclude that the New Art Movement is more about concept art. I appreciate the conception more than the works because I think the public will read more into the minds of the artists, so that perhaps the people's understanding of "siomay" expands. That's all. Thank you.

Audience 3: I'd like to thank the speakers. At least they presented some data. It's actually interesting. And I'm actually disappointed at Arief for questioning whether it is art or not. I think for Arief, what should've been interesting is the data, the socialisation process. So I'd like to thank the speakers. What is more important is honesty. From the pieces here, I see there is a doubt about the honesty of my fellows. Frankly, I know these fellows, so I'll be honest. When Arief was talking about what art is, I saw narrow-mindedness. I can see the background of these artists. We see why they created their pieces. Let's consider their educational background. Most of the artists come from Design. They actually feel inferior, especially those from ASRI in Jogjakarta, because there is the assumption that Design people are second-class. So the long process culminated here. We are told to feel. Damn it! So we can see, can't we? They want to exist. What they created are works of art. These are works of art. Why fussing about works of art? It shows our nation's trait. We are a feminine nation. We are not masculine enough. Secondly, we can see their workplace. Most of them are from advertising, or work in newspapers, such as Kompas. We see these two possibilities. Actually, there is some pressure, right? Maybe because of the background. Everyone is from the village. Imagine that one has to make something that they don't know. To buy a Corolla? There is pressure. There are two things. One, responsibility because of idealism. Second, if you can't buy (…), call me. So the desire does not come across. Everyday one is asked to create an ad such as "Mazda, the modern technology", while one cannot afford to buy it. So what is this? It's their personal problem. Their psychological issue. Thank you.

Arief Budiman: It turns out that there is not only the New Art Movement, but the new *ketoprak* (Javanese theater) movement. But I'm glad that there are various expressions, because it indicates a connection with the audience. Everyone can find their own interests. Please, Marwan, if you'd like to join the discussion.

Audience 4 (Marwan): The earlier discussion from Arief Budiman is about the relative measures under the definition of fine art. The first thing is that, when it is said to be based on one relative assessment in the terms of fine art values, we can say that we are agreed on the fact that there are no such kinds of rewards, assessment of values that are given to certain artwork, being evaluated or valued, which we also have in a sense, but it is a judgment of values in the relative term. Secondly, we will say that the schools of fine art or the other institutions are also not needed. Nevertheless, if we say that conceptual art is the one which values the growth of mushrooms growing everywhere, of course we can also say that artwork, even the most cliché ones, also have a cliché value. Thus, in this term, even within in the clichéd world, the art works will be valued in such cliché ways. On the other hand, if we refer to the kinds of values which can gain certain positions, such as the value of the originality of the artwork itself. It relates to the topic of today's discussion. While visiting this exhibition, I can only give an impression that, from what I have seen while I was entering the gate, I can see myself being engulfed from the start by banners, advertisements, and some writings whose nature might not be unfamiliar for all of us. I understand that it relates with commercial matters, a kind of artwork which relates with traders. It is understandable, and then we enter the venue in which we can encounter the milieu of the urban society, and from the upper class society in general. And some of them might be the reflections of the urban society with its heterogeneity, the heterogeneity of social classes. However, it is clear that the society reflected in here is the upper class society. Then, what can we see from this upper class society? There is an impression that these reflections include the sense of being oriented—as I have said previously—to a particular country with developed industries. On the other hand, I can say that we are in the time of agricultural nations. This kind of copying tendency happens so fast. Thus we can also restate that the infiltrator is in the hand of an artist, who calls himself an artist, the process itself is not like… if it indeed needs to be included, we can see it in some famous museums, maybe some of them have been abroad, the things that I have seen are almost similar with the ones there. So, it is not merely things that we can get in Indonesia, maybe, but now, I do not really know. The second impression is a sense of intellectual snobbishness, in which this exhibition is fully supported in such a way with a tendency to make the sensitivity of the perception of fine art itself scientific, whether in the way of the research that has been done, and then some of the declarations and writings addressing all kinds of non-divine revelation, and all kinds of forms. This also has placed some kinds of new values once again, which can only be coupled to the ones of the past. The fact that the reformation is only the continuation of another new group, I feel is maybe not intended. However, it can be trapped in this kind of condition. I think that is all that I can possibly say, if I have more, I will speak again later.

Arief Budiman: *Merci beaucoup* Monsiour Mirwan, since he just came back from Paris. I remember there is a particular event of an arts movement in France, which is such a coincidence, since the previous speaker just came back from France. So, there was this very famous salon or gallery in

Paris. There, those who could enter gathered—only famous artists. And then there were groups of artists who asked to exhibit there. Those who proposed to hold an exhibition there would be tested by Ayatullah Ayusalaf with the art there, they would see what the paintings were like. They would see this painting isn't smooth, but rough and such. When actually, the one which they inspected was by Auguste Renoir, and then one from Seurat, all kinds of paintings were coming there but all of them were rejected. And then there was another gallery which started to exhibit those paintings. It created a huge shake-up in Paris—it was considered to be a pornographic attempt to show trashy work in an esteemed gallery in Paris. They never received recognition for simply drawing a line, and they were considered unfit. If you read the critics in the newspapers at that time, when the impressionists started to exhibit themselves, you can see the harsh scolds from the people who felt that their hegemony had been violated. So I do not want to draw an analogy on the premise of this exhibition as a particular event which is so…, it is not my intention at all. However, it is true that a movement which can shake the well-established paradigm is often met with a kind of strong reaction, which is interesting for me. At that time, we know that the term impressionism originated from a certain painting, if I am not mistaken, by Renoir, or who? Ah, Monet, Claude Monet. He painted an afternoon, if I am not mistaken there is a boat, or is it in the morning? Sorry. So, the title of the painting is *Impression*. It was then mocked by the established arts critics, mockingly calling them impressionists. And now it becomes a kind of pride to call themselves impressionist. They were innovating a new paradigm in which those neat and clean paintings whose colours were not allowed to blend, they became a dominant stream, a new paradigm, a new satisfaction— which now wants to be shaken again. Practice is just mundane stuff. What we need to be aware of is, in my opinion, something which goes with the Contextual Literature concept. I think my friends from the New Art Movement do not want to fight against it. What is wanted is not to establish a new school of art, but rather to destroy the current established school so as to democratise, to show that there are many kinds of values. In my opinion, what we see here is a kind of report of a journey, as said before, and not yet about painting itself. The report of the journey entering into an art group, a banished group, or something like that. I agree that actually, without this exhibition, it lives healthy outside, just like what was said by the previous speaker. So it lives and grows bigger. Actually, what we do here is to become their agents who show to the people that it does exist and to acknowledge it. It is not necessary, even without this, orders keep coming and progress rapidly. In fact, what we need to attack is the one which we want to address in accordance with the audience—towards art critics, that this is also art, gentlemen! Do not only uncurl the already established paintings. They do not care whether this exists or not, the dance art continues, the shooting continues, even without being discussed. If we can democratise our attitude, then that is where our deeper soul lies, and I do hope that with the existence of a different, wider and more democratic paradigm, more masterpieces will be created. Because our paradigm right now is a dead-end paradigm. Based on certain assumptions that art has a particularly rigid and high value, like the value of truth. These is just a few of my comments. I invite anyone who wants to speak

again. Please do come forward.

Audience 5: I will not fuss about the conceptual background which underlies this Project 1. It means that this conceptual background is actually not something new anymore—already quite old. Indeed, if we take a look back on the history of the world's art movements, we might be familiar with who can overturn values with the credo "no more masterpiece", in which time the theatres along with Broadway and others suddenly become a *street* culture. And it inspired other art movements at that time and then appearing both in films, fine arts, and others. Or maybe if we can make it much simpler, my grandfather, who lives in a village near Borobudur, who everyday makes slippers, everyday he produces the slippers, and sometimes he makes some sculptures, and still keeps producing things that we might consider simple. But he is a highly-esteemed artist in his neighbourhood and communities. It means that if we think about it in a simple way that art is use, as is cited in the manifesto, then what happens with the condition of our fine arts nowadays is not the problem anymore. Secondly, when I came to see the exhibition, and I enjoyed the feelings that came out, then I came to a conclusion that in fact liberation, as was celebrated in the manifesto, the liberating arts, and liberation from fine arts, it is in fact in the material form that we watch, that freedom is never free of values. It means that what we watched, if we borrow Arief's term, is that there is a creative syntheses there but it fails somehow, there is a creative synthesis, there are strategies like what we see if we see other exhibitions. For the moment, it turns out that liberation, like what has buzzed around, fell onto the old values in which the world masterpieces were exhibited in such ways. Secondly, in relation with the orientation as *massive* art, I might come to an understanding more if the mass products which are exhibited in this New Art were not being exhibited in an exclusive art center. Meaning that as a mass product, it will only be successful when it is tested directly in front of the masses, which is different from us here who might be considered elite. It then falls again on the elitism against which it wants to fight. And then secondly, in the socialisation process, if we see that what the artwork products show, which refer to these kinds of mass products, where they are offering certain products which require capital because they are consumed by a huge mass, it then falls to a certain elitism. It means that there is only a certain group who can do what has been implied by the previous speaker that this specific group is the one that can unite the ideas and also, most importantly, the funds and others with the presence of sponsors, consisting of big capitalists as well, so it might be possible to reach a conclusion that what has been defended so far is also a capitalist art. Here, if we want to look here, there is a product, capital that is not small in amount, which is the base for the birth of mass products previously mentioned. However, the fact that if we see it from its conceptual framework, there might be a euphoria that even in our current condition, ideas which are oriented towards liberation were born. Although concerns have emerged about the freedom that was touted about so expensively, it was not anticipated adequately by the works. Thank you.

Audience 6: I am not a fine arts artist, while I make short films in which I go around from village to village. In Nusa Tengara Timor in 1982, I visited a pastor and he showed me something. He said "hey brother, this is *tenun*, woven by the locals". I was interested with it, and I wondered whether it is aesthetics or not, it felt like a kind of artwork from a long social process, because it took them three months to make. Then we bought it. Suddenly, I thought about how a daily aesthetic can be brought up to the surface with such a massive social impact, since it is true that their life there is poor. I am reminded of the writings of Umar Kayam which highlight the themes about artists which produce paintings of everyday life. He lifted it and nailed it, and then they can relate and appreciate them. Here, suddenly, we have a democratic relation with them, we shake their hands and we do not feel any distance from them. Here, suddenly, we see someone who can bring out that kind of quotidian world to be able to hold each other's hand, to hold each other's hands in a democratic relationship which is indeed useful ideologically and aesthetically such as that. If we go to the villages, there are plenty of people who collect their daily yield and then relate them with all of us who might never touch their kind of life. This is where the real democracy emerges. What I am interested in this problem is how is the relationship between one arts groups and another. Why do I say so? Because of what was said by Arief about the notion that democracy in itself is very expensive, very dangerous and due to its grandeur, it is difficult to achieve. Within the struggles between these art groups, or this is indeed the struggle for freedom itself. Because at the bottom line, city life will always be connected with the distribution of power, where there is the relationship between masters and slaves, where the ones who master modern life, communication through magazines, communication through places of life such as exhibitions, they will be the ones who control their own groups, and they will legitimate their groups. What I want from this New Arts Movement, if we indeed lead towards democracy itself, then there must be honesty in itself, and how to achieve the democracy itself. Because we can talk about democracy, but the way to get it is not democratic, as we also use the scheme of communication power which indeed should be the requisite of a city life. Thus, from this modern art, one of the main lessons from me is that indeed we have to be able to master the modern communication principles: newspapers, intellectuals, exhibition sites, and others. As far as our consciousness extends, so that when we say that a certain movement must be nuanced, or we indeed are sincere to lift the lives of people just like the priest who lifted the traditional art, he raised it and he is valued on the same level. Handshaking and equal levels are indeed difficult. It might seem equal but in fact one dominates another. Thus, how they dominate one another, doing …, especially on the same level. Thank you.

Arief Budiman: Is there anything else? More from Hardi, please.

Audience 7 (Hardi): Good evening. Honestly I feel uneasy, like to my previous comment regarding any assessment of artwork from my closest friends, Jimi Supangkat, Harsono, Gendut, and many others. Siti Adiyati also has just returned from France. Jimi reminded me that this discussion

should be honest. I am not defending these New Art artists, but I can see that they are quite honest. So we see this exhibition complete with a manifesto, and we see Arief Budiman who elegantly shared his motivations and suggestions why they stand out as a group that deserves to receive special attention, and critics should pay attention to this. I think we still need further explanation of what is an aesthetics of freedom. What is one aesthetic? Of course the one who can answer the question is the one who created that term. What exactly is freed here? Every day we see advertisements in the newspaper, and we are happy. In the newspapers, we rarely see photos of Affandi—perhaps once a year—when he has an exhibition. What was written by FX, Dono, and the others, who have sympathy for Affandi. Meanwhile, Toyota advertisements, and such, show models like Marissa Haque with her red lips, we see feminine pads in women magazines, and there is actually no problem. This is just Jimi's trick. He has been doing this for ten years, right? Coincidentally, he can organise and convince sponsors, and that is actually the greatness of Jimi Supangkat. Like what Arief Budiman stated, he is the real socialist, as has been stated so many times in Kompas, when he debated Kwek Kian Gie and Christianto Wibisono—suddenly, he defended this supermarket, confusing me. Then, Arief Budiman, that's what I know, he is an advocate for elite art according to the New Art now. He has written about OE in Horison magazine, about the paintings of OE. He totally praised them, and now he is like this, he totally defends advertisements, and he urges us to ensure that advertisements are beautiful. We are sure, Arief, already sure, there are no problems at all. Maybe if there is problem, the problem is people advertising themselves. Institutionally, I think DKJ is open enough with exhibiting work like this, so there are no obstacles. Meanwhile, Dodo Karonting, who has fifteen years worth of reputation, still has a difficult time exhibiting, let alone, in the main gallery! It is very difficult. So actually there is no problem here—it's only tricks and I like clowns. So I see Arief tonight becoming a comedian. Frankly, if the case is like this, we will be sadder to see our intellectual panorama bought with money. It is only a small amount of money that makes people change their mind to say something else. Is this honesty, Arief? I wanted to ask—sorry, please don't slap me, I am not a politician. Then, if we want to discuss the art being called *megalom*—being called elite—thus it is the one being isolate. Because of what? Because there is resistance there. The painting by Dede, who is brave to paint a demonstration at the capitol building, has the stakes of possibly being arrested. Nowadays, he will not be detained anyway. The army won't even see this. Look at this so-called New Art, moreover at Ratu Plaza, loving that New Art, at Gajah Mada Plaza, it's all so expensive . Even the Hero supermarket close to here is very expensive. So this argument totally took place behind the desk while laughing, because the orders have gone down, and then now it is like this. Incidentally, the Arts Council was not really aware of this issue, using the name New Art. However, the New Art Movement was disbanded by Jimi in 1979. It was written about in Kompas. Now, if it will be rebuilt, it is only the name that is coming along. I was surprised to read that Dede Eri Supriya joined the exhibition. I asked him: Are you joining, De? He answered: I am not joining, but I was pulled into it. Oh my god, this is truly an ad-man, I said—making the actions seem acceptable.

So all that were attached, like during the seminar at Kompas led by Arief Budiman. Umar Kayam, Romo Mangun, I was sad because our intellectuals with thousands of pages written, then talking as if it was real. In fact, it hadn't been made yet. So how could the people depend on you? One day before the the exhibition I was given the catalogue. I opened it and saw a picture of an architect. I saw the car that would be installed like QLX—what is QLX?. On the third level—but here there are no levels, whatsoever. Meaning that technically the exhibition was very sloppy, although their technique only involved a jack. People can do the same thing by borrowing from Lakon, jack it up, then push it higher, finished. However he wasn't able to. From this one thing, we can see that the exhibition was held only for fun. From that fun, we perceived it as a serious thing because we desire it. Why is New Art so big? Because there is Hardi, and Dede, Slamet Riyadi, Bonyong, and Jimi drawing pictures of vaginas, but I drew Soeharto playing golf. So with this, I actually feel really sad. I think projects like this don't have to be continued. So ordinary—an advertisement is an advertisement. I am a painter; Affandi is a painter, but counting his money, he is already bored with exhibiting here. Let it be without any elites, and this, because every field—I do not mean to give advice—has struggles and risks. I feel that for our intellectuals, like Arief, we have to be careful. Those who want to be supported—and what they want supported—they must be careful. If they are not careful, it will be such a waste for Indonesia. It is wasteful for Arief Budiman, who has been an intellectual for a long time, all to be erased by these supermarkets. So, thank you. Because Halim is hankering to comment. And I feel like the significant thing is not a one way discussion like this, similar to Sudomo with the people, or Darmono with the people, but Jimi needs to participate. How can they explain these elite ideas, exhibiting at such an elite location? For example, Mualim. Try to explain what happened, so the people understand. And if this discussion sounds too simple or "village", well this is how our people actually are. The elites already read Kompas, which you have scorned. Thank you.

Arief Budiman: Thank you very much Hardi, especially for the advice for me to be careful. I have heard the advise frequently, especially from the authorities, if they call me. They always say that I have to be careful because I have a family, a wife. I should speak carefully though. However, while I am always thankful for advice, I still have my own principles. Next I invite Halim, or who wanted to speak earlier?

Audience 8 (Halim): To the organisers, thank you. First of all, I want to introduce myself because I am not the only one present, but there are some friends who are students, who were active at the University of Indonesia. So what I mean is that the exhibition really happens because of the concerns from the students. And I am sure that one of supporters of avant-garde art is the university. So I think it is legitimate if I speak a little. I was quite disappointed by Hardi earlier—sorry—because he, as an ex-member and prominent figure from the New Art Movement, does not show any of the leadership that is needed. I agree with what Arief said earlier. And the answers

from Hardi missed the point. The problem is that the exhibition is not original, but the context here is different. What happens in daily life abroad can be brought here and the context is already different. What we have experienced is that something beyond us forcing a confrontation. What I mean is that when we see (…) there is creativity coming from our own concept or coming from the environment and reality. Now, what appears here is coming from a strong foreign society. So what we discussed earlier is to pay attention to the people. So what I want to say is perhaps related to the issues raised by Arief Budiman about when great art can occur. And I think it only occurs if the artists follow the feeling of the era, right? So they can't just concentrate inside their rooms, or think alone. This is only one example, how reality is outside, and it is strong. You cannot fight for it, because behind it is great power, right? It does not mean that, with this situation, artists won't emerge, but it has to be responded to. This is a point that was missing previously from Hardi's comments. I think that Arief Budiman does not need to answer that. Thank you.

Arief Budiman: One of the reasons why I am interested in supporting this movement is that when I spoke to Jakoeb Oetama, he said that indeed there is a group of artists from the New Art Movement that came to him, proposing their ideas, that they want to see the cultural expressions from around Jakarta. This is what Jakoeb related, and I do agree because we had just discussed cultural polemics, whether basically our culture should follow to the East or the West. Is Indonesia Eastern or Western? This kind of debate will never end. Rather than keep debating what exactly is Indonesian art. Stop debating. We can take a look around us, at our environment. What can we see? What would a portrait of what is around us look like? Perhaps from there we can study. And what they saw is this. This, this is the cultural expression that exists there. It is reported. I do not consider this as an artwork from the New Art Movement; for me this exhibit—maybe Jimi does not agree—is in the form of a report from an odyssey. So for me, the value of this exhibition is not here in the gallery, but it is aftermath—what will happen to Jimi as an artist. Because of that I am happy, not using the name. It is in contradiction with the basic artistic expression from the artists. This is only a report like when I went to Europe; I am not European. I went to France, let's say, and I write something about France—it was funny, there was a striptease show, and there was this, and there was Pigalle, and there was good art too. This, for me, is what is interesting. I went there, and I felt, ohhh, so it is like this, and seeing it, I felt nauseated to see such extravagant expression, but I was happy as a symptom of what also exists in our artists in the framework for seeing what is happening in our culture. So what is interesting for me here is that from the criticism given it seemed that the artists who made this have been bought. I do not care about the motivation, everyone wants to build their reputation, I think including Hardi, myself too, perhaps. It can be all different kinds, and doesn't end. We have to stop in relation to the person's motivation. Perhaps Hardi draw Pak Harto playing golf, or I am also motivated to to build my name. It does not matter; what's wrong with that? Originally, he showed something with a clear goal. There is much more we have to consider. So for me, I support this movement because I have one principle: to democratise

value. Indeed, the description of art is accurate, as expressed by .

File Title: Audio Recording of the Seni Rupa Baru Project 1 Exhibit Discussion_tape 2
Duration: 39 minutes 6 seconds

Arief Budiman: It's good that people are appreciative. But honestly, when we see the advertisement for Toyota, we appreciate it, but we do not see it as artwork; we see it, rather, as something that sells, you know. But we appreciate it. What I want to say is that perhaps we should be modest so as to be able to see that there is art there, regardless of the motivation behind it. For now, I would like to invite the audience to speak; the floor is yours. This is also a form of a direct democracy—we can speak freely, so do not hesitate to be harsh.

Audience 1: I'd actually like to repeat a little of what was said by Hardi about liberation. Something already exists here, which in the catalog is said to be liberation of the arts from "high art", that is, painting, graphic art, and sculpture. For me, actually, liberating the fine arts by exhibiting media that we have never seen before, like what we are doing now, does not need to be problematised. Because if we look at the history, the media that have been used were already in use in many expressions dating back to the prehistoric era. We can see them in classic poetry, etc. They made use of illustrations. Or at classic churches, they have also used glass as a design that can be said as expressions used by the people. In my opinion, here, the definition of liberation is not clearly stated. What is actually being liberated? What bound is it being liberated from? If we take a peek at the development of the art of painting, actually each artist already has one; every artist has the motivation for liberation. However, unfortunately, this brought in a new bind. When Picasso fought against Impressionism, he also made a liberatory act. However, twenty years after him, another boundary rose, and again, until there were many issues arising in the States, such as abstract expressionism. In the end, every individual has the consciousness to liberate, to liberate instantly what they thought has bound them in their era. So, I'd like to repeat the question, what is the real definition of liberation according to them? That's all.

Arief Budiman: The one who raised a hand earlier, please state your question.

Audience 2: This is very important, for all in the audience, especially for Mas Arief, that, in fact, tonight Mas Arief is not speaking in Salatiga; you are speaking at Taman Ismail Marzuki, you are speaking in front of a group of people who actually share the same thought in their minds. Mas Arief, you said that the New Art Movement wanted to present what they could document and then they would display it as it is. However, they also made some alterations, they tried to beautify what they would display, but it is not contemplative, there is no existence, the empirical experience cannot be felt. Then, that the… that's the first, and second, we know that the artists are people from graphic design backgrounds, who I know for sure put food on the table with advertising jobs and such, of which advertisements they then made fun of, etc. That has already been a few years.

Since there was Astaga magazine, Aktuil magazine, and such, how many times did they made fun of those advertisements? We came here and we were presented with such a thing to watch. Honestly, I feel disgusted to watch this kind of thing. And then, in addition, I'd like to apologize in advance, I feel uneasy to say this, I don't mean to make any accusation, but please think about it, I call this a LEKRA Movement, an organized one, it's true. Why did I call this that? Mas Jimi, and the next fellow, what's your name? Sanento? Tempo, Kompas, Pikiran Rakyat, all of them are under its control. I don't know why Sanento is here today, when he made a review in Tempo—four full-color pages—what can we expect? Masturbation! Yes, Mas Hardi, masturbation. This should be deeply investigated, Mas Jim, for its antithesis in another occasion. So this will become a real movement, with Mas Arief to add things, to spice it up, and make it official. To be honest, conceptually, many people shake their heads, but the form of the energy is seen from the result. The movement will be better, more spontaneous, clearer, and contemplative. And for this thing? I would say no thanks.

Arief Budiman: I will give a short comment on this, as a former psychologist, I would say that in truth, masturbation is healthy.

Audience 3: Good evening. I see this exhibition as the work of an architect whose work is actually made by his manual labourers. It is like when I see the architecture of Borobudur Temple, behind it was an architect, and there are parts that were worked on by the manual labourers and other artists. Besides, I feel that in Borobudur we can still find a very old yet great philosophy, but here, I find this to be a fleeting event that will be gone and then continued by other projects. Therefore, I cannot judge this yet. I wonder if in the next project the problem will be the supermarket and the consumerist products. Is it possible that someday there will be another project? I want to see the next project soon and I am looking forward to it patiently. Thank you.

Audience 4: Good evening. Thank you. I just wanted to respond to the comments from Mas Arief. I agree that we see art as a form of report. Whatever the form of art, to me personally, it must have a social function. Thus, when art is merely packaged as a form of beauty and that becomes the only purpose, the beauty will be a commercial product. In the end, art will only be enjoyed by the rich. If art is connected to a social function, can this kind of report provide us with some kind of awareness: can the consumerism seen by painters or artists in this project give us an awareness that consumerism, which we dislike, can engage us when we pass it by? Even if the painting could give us critique, for our awareness, that consumerism is a devil for the Indonesian economy, then it would be good. Good. Therefore, all kinds of art, to me, have to have some social function. When art only pursues beauty, by using colors, by using composition, by using all the technology that becomes more and more advanced, art itself will end up as work that can be enjoyed, but not encourage us to have awareness. Therefore, whether this raises our awareness, that is the measure. If this raises our awareness that consumerism has to be destroyed, it will be legitimate.

And art has its roots in, or becomes part of the lives of Indonesian people. That's my opinion. Thank you.

Arief Budiman: The last comment might be the reason why we are easily labeled as neoliberal, but it doesn't matter for me because, in my opinion, pluralism of value is the important thing. So, I appreciate the opinion that art should have a social function, and it is a human right that I also defend. I also defend the people who want high aesthetics, as long as they have a supporting audience. Mas Mirman, I guess. Please understand, as he rarely visits Indonesia.

Audience 5: I'd like to respond to correct Arief Budiman's assumption, which made a parallelism between this exhibition and the impressionism exhibition in France in the 19th century. Impressionism was indeed new at that time, we had never seen such a thing. It had never existed and was brand new. However, in the researchers' opinion, the exhibition was something new but something that we also often saw. That's it. What's regrettable is when the masters of the fine arts give false judgments. Second, some friends here said that they have seen this sort of exhibition in many places, such as in the displays of famous shops in Jakarta and other places. If so, if they said so, isn't it the same as a zoo, where all these poor animals would have had better lives in the wildlife than in the cages? I think some of the works here should be displayed in their original places. Thank you.

Audience 6: Honestly, I am disappointed. I mean, I came here from far away, I am from Bandung, and here I have to hear this unclear discussion. It is clear that there is not one main orientation here. The purpose of this group is also unclear; on one hand, there are some who are holding onto the traditional values and on the other hand, there are some who are defensive of this expression, this manifestation, and it is also unclear. What is being discussed? Is it art, politics of art, or what? If you want to talk about the politics of art, talk about it professionally. Let's talk with a smile, about all these problems. I mean in this forum, it's like we are forced to talk about fleeting, sporadic things only. Like Mas Hardi said before. This problem appeared as a result of some people's restlessness. To provoke others to feel the same restlessness, it is weird. In my opinion, I personally see this matter as an alternative, merely an alternative. I mean, it is not supposed to be standardised, let's not struggle to include it as the people's problem; it is not necessary. Just express this group's voice, a group, make it the group's responsibility, that's it. Because, from the point of view of art, leaving from Bandung I imagined finding something new here. But what I see here is not actually new art. Thank you. That's all.

Arief Budiman: Any more? Go ahead.

Audience 7: What I feel when I see this exhibition and then read about the manifesto of the New

Art Movement, I get the feeling that this movement wants to base art on our mental functions, that is, the intellect, rather than on other functions such as intuition, feeling, et cetera. Then, I tried to understand more about the background of this movement, the starting point of this movement, the intellect. However, what I get is contradictions within the premises of the manifesto itself. The clearest thing is that there are two things that made me confused and made me feel like I was being played by this phenomenon. There are two interesting words that needed to be pondered upon, that is, the word “liberation” and the word “democracy.” Of course, I wonder what is meant by liberation? What is meant by democracy? On one hand, it is said to liberate but on the other hand, we see in the next notion, in the next manifesto, that it actually traps art in one definition that they regard as… within the definition of the liberation’s aesthetics. So, this confused me a bit, and I think we have to contemplate it, the words that we use, if we are consistent by holding on to our mental function, yes, the intellect, our intellect. Second, it is the word “democracy”. One of the things that the New Art Movement wanted to fight for is democratisation, but if we take a look further, it didn’t happen. Why? Because in the process, the process of this movement became totalitarian to the concept, because it wanted to eliminate the existing ideas or concepts. Meanwhile, in the definition of democratisation, there is tolerance for the ideas outside of itself, outside of ourselves, who have certain ideas. However, the New Art Movement wanted to eliminate or destroy the existing ideas. For example, the Movement fights against the pure art, the fine arts; it fights against the concept of applied art. In my opinion, we need to understand these concepts clearly, wisely, before we use them to express our thoughts. And here I see my fellow intellectuals are trapped inside it actually. They are not careful in using the terms. Let’s take another look at the manifesto and the writing in the catalog; there are many premises of which logics are actually contradictory. I think that’s all. The most important thing is that we contemplate.

Arief Budiman: I think with democratisation, a democratisation movement has to fight against the totalitarian system. So at least, when people want a democracy of value, any concept that is undemocratic, something that kills democracy, must be found. What is fought against, when the pure art is fought against, it means those who claimed that the pure art has a higher level than the applied art. So the concept is not the pure art or the applied art, but the effect of authoritarianism of the fine arts because sometimes the fine arts... or the pure art, has the connotation that is, as I said before, mono-value. That’s what should be fought against, so that there are other values existing outside of that value. But then we would have to talk in length about it. It’s 9:15. I think we often have to be smart about when to enter and when to exit. Exit is when a good political leader, when he is late to exit, he will be criticised because he enjoyed too much time at the top. I know there are many problems, for sure. However, if we prolong the argument, we will be stuck in the same place. I know there are many other questions to ask. And I think the debate won’t stop here, but is there anyone else who would like to speak up? Let me see, this is the last session, how many people here would like to speak up? I saw one person raised a hand. Is there anyone else? If there is

none, I will close the discussion so it won't be too long. Would you? Two people? They are the last two and afterward, let's end the session. The floor is yours.

Audience 8: I just want to ask Jim Supangkat a question. There are too many things that I don't understand; there are too many things that I don't know much about the credo. But I have one question about the elite. I'd like to ask for Pak Jimi's opinion. I'll take some of Pak Bud's, I mean Arief Budiman's opinions, and I'd like to ask for Jimi Supangkat's. When Pak Arief said that if we saw a Toyota's advertisement, we could probably say it was not a form of art. Can that opinion be regarded as the statement of the elite? I think that's all. That's it. I believe that Arief Budiman is not an agent of elitism.

Audience 9: I think I have to share my opinion because I feel that the problem is growing bigger. For me, the New Art Movement is not something that should be prevented from developing. After reading the articles in Kompas, the catalog of all of the works, and lastly the article written by Sanento Yuliman in Tempo, I got a clear view about what the New Fine Art Movement wants. However, just as written by Sanento, the absence of written art criticism about graphic design, posters, and billboards, is probably because of the posters and billboards themselves. When people encounter such art products, they can feel the message contained in the element of the art, itself. So what appears to us is the message itself. So unconsciously, the expressions of fine arts became secondary. It doesn't mean it doesn't have any value, but for me, such development has reached the level where the implication presented by the work of art is no longer a problem. So, actually, I like what Mas Hardi said earlier, that there is not a problem in the arts. And I just thought that I agreed with Sanento on why the arts critics in our country today, for instance, talking about the design of the Lux soap box in the media, such as Kompas, we rarely find them criticising why the model acts a certain way, why the photography is a certain way. Such critique is rare. But if we look back, the value of communication has blended, and the message and the device to interpret the message have merged. Therefore, we feel no distance. It is really different when we see Sadali's paintings, where we—whether we like it or not—have to admit that there is an obstacle and this obstacle comes from the laypeople who are not familiar with the elements of art. Thus, the arts became elitist. However, I think there are other things that affect this assumption, for instance the impression I got when seeing Sadali's paintings, and such; there are other nonphysical things confronted by this movement. For me, the physical, the spiritual, are worth defending. Because if the movement influences the general or communal culture, I think this is a reflection of the materialism-idealist symptoms. It is more in the form of the achievement of material value, because there is a mutual factor between the service provider by the financial return from the provider. In my opinion, if in our culture, the materialistic idealism and the spiritual are obstructed because they are regarded as elitist, I am worried about the future of our culture. No matter what happens, balance should exist. And I think there are many people who agree with this movement, that the

value of artwork, it doesn't mean that Sadali's paintings are much more precious than the works of Kompas designers. In the end, it goes back to Pak Arief's opinion that every field, every place, move on its own track. The art of painting, which is generally seen as pure art, is moving on its track and the applied art which is defended by the New Art Movement is also moving on its own track. I think we should think about how we can improve the quality of the fine arts expression in Indonesia. Take, for example, Agus Adam who sometimes talks about Makari's designs, designs from the Fortune group. So there is a kind of balance between the designer and the art critics. Thank you.

Arief Budiman: Thank you for all the speakers who have shared openly. I'd still like to give the opportunity to Jim Supangkat if he still has any ideas to share.

Jimi Supangkat: I don't think there is anything to be clarified. We don't deny that all of the people here are an elite group. We are hypocrites if we claimed that we talk on behalf of the people. I think that we all are actually a part of the elite. So much here in Indonesia is fixated on the hypocrisy of talking about "the people". So we don't have to debate, or I'm not apologising because everybody here is a part of the elite and we are discussing within an elite forum, resulting in debate amongst the elite. What I mean by "elite", actually, what we are discussing here is quite broad among the members, and was clearly expressed by Mas Arief. But maybe I will add on the topic of the mind controls. Now here there is a different—an elite connotation. That it is more distinctive in the image problems and the definition of our art, there is an elite definition within the elite social understanding that we are facing right now. However, it is an elite culture that originally came from 500 B.C. that was adapted by the Renaissance, and now we are stuck with it. We are discussing the merit of elite domination. It means that, like Mas Arief said, high art or pure art, and the like, receive a position that is more special compared to the other art forms. Therefore, the idea to talk about a pluralism of the arts, especially within the fine arts, is, as Mas Arief said, about accepting all forms of art. I reiterate here that we, the New Art Movement, have never opposed the painting exhibitions, such as the work of Sadali, Affandi, and others. I have written reviews, and I don't feel embarrassed that I have written on Affandi and such. But what we are about is that these elite art groups, meaning the ones that are generally here at Taman Ismail Marzuki, claim, themselves, to be the only real art. That's what this is really about. So it's not about the old tradition like what was suspected by, who was that?—the one who said that we started from the wrong premise—we were never opposed their existence. However, like what was said by Mas Arief, the hegemony of this kind of art. Within our New Art group, there have been debates, about whether this art differentiates, or not. It has been a tough debate, and split the group into two factions. Is this the problem we seek? Just like the accusations of some of the earlier speakers? We went through quite a long debate until we found some indications that suggested that there truly is mind control. Like when we take a closer look, the reaction to our exhibition can be said to be an indicator of the

reaction of “pure” artist communities, on the pluralism effort. I think that artists like Hardi, and like the others, they will of course be angry if they have to share the gallery space here in the Taman Ismail Marzuki with other kind of art. So maybe if Hardi can exhibit three times every one or two years, he should share the space with other kinds of art. So one exhibition could last for five years. This is just one of the possibilities. Then, there is another thing that we call an indicator of mind control. Mind control is actually quite unstable—in the understanding—that there is a thought, there is an aesthetic that dominates us that we do not fully understand it. Mind control, here in Indonesia, has become normative. I think in this matter, Hardi himself has faced this. I think that we, from the New Art Movement before 1987, have experienced how mind control became the norm, and became an axe, like what we know, the ones who may exhibit here were strictly selected, and then many times, for the Biennale, batik artists were banned from the paintings exhibitions. I saw that as the past—that it will not occur in the future—to say that batik paintings are not part of the art of painting. Without argument! Take for example, 500 B.C., in the era of Greeks, and the era of the Renaissance in the 16th Century, people debated about “pure art” and “mechanical art” and tried to differentiate their values, and the debate continues. But in Indonesia, there is no debate—art or not art. I think that judgment gives evidence that mind control became worse, compared to when a thing is believed. As we can see in this discussion, what happened? Actually, what should have occurred is a debate on the aesthetics of pluralism, as was mentioned earlier. There are those believe that aesthetics have all sorts of measures and standards, and there are those who fight for one universal measure of art—that art has to transcend. But we see that this debate didn’t happen. There was rather a boxing match. And I think that it is only a source, and the artists in the upper class environment felt that their privileges were under threat. I think that’s the real problem. And then, we found out that we were labeled “traitors” at the opening of this forum, because we are efficient artists. We come from the same group as Hardi, and I guess we have the same level of education, but we tried to open our horizon. I thought you would all feel offended. In particular because we became traitors. I think I agree with Mas Arief’s opinion that all threats will come back to our faith. It means that we are labeled “traitors” and such, but we have a fundamental faith to continue move forward. As was said by Mas Arief, we will try to explore all angles of art that exists in our environment. This time it was about mass culture, and another time, it may be about traditional art, or maybe commercial fine art. Why not? The one that is insulted, thought to be trash—maybe there is something there. What is clear is that there is the environment—the context. I think that is the promise we make, and of course only God knows. Who knows if we will be lured into doing another and another—we can’t guarantee it, 100%. But our will is still here. I think that’s all from me.

Arief Budiman: Thank you, Jim. I really hope that your will isn’t broken in the middle of this journey. Because I really value this movement, and this exhibition is really Project 1. I hope that you will reach Projection 1000, one day, we don’t know exactly when. I support this movement because I

agree with the main principal of the manifesto. I still say that it is one process, one odyssey that hasn't ended, that continues to progressing. What is clear, I don't support this because there is money, because I can sell myself for much more than an honorarium. I want to say thank you, and perhaps this can be continued in private, because there is actually still so much that I want to answer—so many interesting points for me, to discuss, but we are still searching for pieces of the mosaic. So I want to say thank you, and I appreciate the openness from all of you. Good night, and hopefully to be continued.

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